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C O N F I D E N T I A L COLOMBO 001991

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [KNNP](#) [PARM](#) [PREL](#) [IR](#) [EU](#) [AORC](#) [IAEA](#)

SUBJECT: SRI LANKA WILL TRY TO BE HELPFUL AT IAEA BOARD MEETING

REF: STATE 212969

Classified By: Ambassador Jeffrey J. Lunstead for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[11](#). (C) Ambassador spoke to Foreign Secretary Palihakkara November 23 regarding upcoming IAEA Board meeting, explaining our decision not to seek referral of Iran to the UNSC at this time and also our desire that this not be seen as an endorsement of Iran's behavior. Palihakkara said that he understood the situation and that Sri Lanka "feels Iran should responsibly respond" to the international community. He promised to "put your views into the pipeline."

[12](#). (C) COMMENT: As we have noted before, Sri Lanka is unlikely to take a harsh line against Iran, given its dependence on Iran for a large part of its crude oil supplies. We are still hopeful that Sri Lanka will be able to make a statement which is helpful. The decision-making structure in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is in great flux right now. A new Foreign Minister was sworn in today, but will not be in the job for a day or two. Palihakkara is technically out of a job, since all Secretaries of Government lose their positions when the Cabinet is dissolved. Nonetheless, he is sitting in his office and taking calls. If he is reappointed as Secretary (he said he was not sure, but that no one had yet asked him to leave), he will be sworn in again in a day or two.

LUNSTEAD